

# Breathing Easier in Grays Harbor County

Patients, visitors and employees are now breathing easier at the Grays Harbor Community Hospital. Their campus is now tobacco-free. This policy was supported by the Grays Harbor County Public Health and Social Services Department's Healthy Communities program, funded in part by the Preventive Health Block Grant.

## Issue

Compared to the state average, more adults in Grays Harbor County smoke, use smokeless tobacco, and are exposed to secondhand smoke in the home.<sup>1</sup> Even the Grays Harbor Community Hospital did not have a policy that protected hospital patients, visitors, and employees from the dangers of secondhand smoke. As part of their Healthy Communities program, the Grays Harbor County Public Health and Social Services Department helped the hospital make this needed change.

## Intervention

In May of 2010, staff from the Grays Harbor County Public Health and Social Services Department joined the hospital's Tobacco-Free Campus Steering Committee. Their goal was to make the hospital tobacco-free by early August. By their June meeting, the new policy was shared with staff, tobacco-free signs and cessation materials were finished, and the outdoor smoking shelter was changed to non-smoking. Employee tobacco cessation support was in place by July. The hospital also provided free nicotine replacement therapy to employees and their families. To help with the transition, the health department also began offering tobacco cessation classes.

## Impact

Grays Harbor Community Hospital fully implemented its 100 percent tobacco-free campus policy as of August 2, 2010. The extra time spent preparing staff and visitors for a tobacco-free campus resulted in less obstacles. An evaluation has started and a committee is in place to address concerns.

